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SUBJECT: CROATIA EMERGING AS A REGIONAL LEADER IN  
COUNTERPROLIFERATION

REF: ZAGREB 739

¶1. In late October 2008, Croatia hosted the "9th International Export Control Conference" in Cavtat (reftel). This event, co-sponsored by the U.S. Export Control and Related Border Security Program, served to further demonstrate the GoC's commitment to the mission of counterproliferation. In welcoming over 200 participants and speakers drawn from 65 countries, Croatia signaled its newfound capacity to act as a leader in this critical global effort. The GoC's willingness to take seriously the issue of export controls, to pursue legislative reforms, and to engage in internationally recognized fora is notable considering Croatia is rarely identified as a source of or destination for proscribed goods.

¶2. Over the last several years, Croatia has worked to develop an effective export control system consistent with international standards. Croatia adopted a Law on the Production, Maintenance, and Trafficking of Arms and Military Equipment in 2002. Croatia's Act on the Export of Dual-Use Items, which controls intangible technology transfers and includes a catch-all provision, entered into force in January ¶2005. An amendment to this Act in July 2008 expanded the law by regulating the brokering of deals as well as technical support (consulting) and transit of dual use goods. That same month, Croatia's Law on the Export and Import of Military Goods and Non-Lethal Goods brought the country's legislation on arms brokering in line with the EU codes of conduct and placed rigorous sanctions on offenders.

¶3. Looking beyond its borders, the GoC has been active in international counterproliferation fora. As Co-Chair of the United Nation's 1540 Committee, the GoC has actively engaged member states in an effort to deepen their commitment to obligations defined by UNSCR 1540. Croatia is a State Party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and a Subscribing State to the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC). In 2005, Croatia became a Participating State in the Wassenaar Arrangement and joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Two years later, Croatia became a Participating State in the Australia Group (AG).

¶4. As the country moves toward membership in NATO and the European Union, neighboring states are increasingly looking toward Croatia for advice and assistance in instituting their own reforms. The GoC's experience in developing a thorough export control system, willingness to engage with partners, and desire to be seen as a regional leader make it a strong ally and natural partner for the USG's counterproliferation programs in Southeastern Europe.  
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